



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DCS and Colts Announce Big Win For Kids

INDIANAPOLIS (September 18, 2007) – The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) and the Indianapolis Colts announced a big win today in their Books For Youth program. With the help of partners from the MSD Washington Township, Advantage Health Solutions, Indianapolis Marion County Public Library and Colts fans, the program has successfully met its first goal of collecting 50,000 books for foster youth and young adults in Marion County. At a press conference today, the DCS and the Colts unveiled their new goal with the help of Colts defensive backs Antoine Bethea and Marlin Jackson.

The event took place at 12:30 today at the local DCS office in Marion County. DCS Director James W. Payne, Superintendent of Washington Township James D. Mervilde, Allisonville Elementary School student Emily Hannon and Colts Executive Director of Community Relations Nicole Duncan gave comments. Volunteers from Advantage Health Solutions, students from MSD Washington Township, DCS employees, and community volunteers were also on hand to help the players and DCS staff unload the 41,525 books collected by elementary school students from MSD of Washington Township for their peers in foster care.

In 2006, the DCS and the Colts joined together to provide a personal library of 25 age-appropriate books to each foster youth and young adult in Marion County. This past week, the DCS and the Colts reached their goal of collecting 50,000. The partners have now set their eye on the new goal of 250,000 books in order to take the program statewide and make a smart hand-off to foster youth across the state.

“As the program expands, we are excited to continue our partnership with the Indianapolis Colts and Advantage Health Solutions. Giving children access to their own books is one simple way to let a child know that they are important. Through the community based Books For Youth program, we will be able to make a positive impact on our youth and young adults,” said James Payne, DCS Director.

The program collects books through community donation drives, local children’s librarians sort the books and volunteers stuff the bags and distribute them to foster children.

“The Metropolitan School District of Washington Township is pleased to work in partnership with DCS and the 2006 World Champion Indianapolis Colts in the Books for Youth Campaign. This important effort will provide books to foster youth and young adults. Reading is the key to success in school and in life, and this campaign will make positive differences in the lives of many young people,” stated Superintendent Mervilde.

The Books For Youth Program is sponsored by the Indiana Department of Child Services, the Indianapolis Colts, Advantage Health Solutions, and the Marion County Public Library System. To find out more on how to hold a donation drive or become a community partner, please visit www.IN.gov/dcs/booksforyouth or call 234-KIDS.

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